



# *Carver County Public Works*

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September 4, 2013

To Whom It May Concern:

SUBJECT: Negative Declaration Regarding the Need for an Environmental Impact Statement for the Southwest Reconnection Project: Highway 61/101 Flood Mitigation.

The proposed project includes the construction of a new 4,226-foot long four-lane bridge over the Minnesota River floodplain area and will include roadway safety and capacity improvements to Carver County State Aid Highway 61 (also known as Flying Cloud Drive) from approximately 475 feet west of Bluff Creek Drive to approximately 350 feet east of the Highway 61/101 "Wye" intersection. The project features pedestrian/bicycle trail improvements including a trail located on the southwest side of the bridge. An 8-foot off-road trail will also extend east along the north side of CSAH 61 (Flying Cloud Drive) to the eastern project termini and west to Bluff Creek Drive. Several drainage and water quality features are also proposed to collect, convey, and/or treat surface water runoff.

Under Minnesota rules, Carver County is the Responsible Governmental Unit (RGU) for this project. The proposed action was described and analyzed in an Environmental Assessment Worksheet (EAW) circulated to the EAW Distribution List and others. A Notice of Availability appeared in the EQB Monitor on May 27, 2013. A public open house meeting was held on June 26, 2013. The comment period closed July 3, 2013.

A thorough analysis of the project and its potential impacts was completed by Carver County, in cooperation with MnDOT, Scott County, and the cities of Chanhassen and Shakopee. Through its own analysis, coordination with affected agencies, public involvement, and comments received, Carver County has determined that the proposed Southwest Reconnection Project as described in the EAW and the Findings of Fact and Conclusion (FOF&C) does not have the potential for significant environmental impact. At their August 27, 2013 County Board of Commissioner's meeting, Carver County concluded that an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) is not required, and as a result has issued a Negative Declaration Order for the project. This decision and determination is supported by the full administrative record of the project, including the FOF&C. The Negative Declaration concludes the Minnesota state environmental review process. Construction is currently planned to commence in 2014.

Enclosed please find a copy of the FOF&C document. An electronic version of the FOF&C and other project related items are available on the project website at: <http://www.dot.state.mn.us/metro/projects/hwy101river/index/html>.

For the Carver County Public Works Department

Lyndon Robjent, Public Works Director